



NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

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July 18, 2012

The Honorable Duncan Hunter
223 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tim Walz
1722 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Hunter and Walz:

The National Guard Association of the United States respectfully asks members of the House of Representatives to vote against legislation sponsored by Rep. Jack Kingston and Rep. Betty McCollum that prohibits the Defense Department from sponsoring professional sports as part of its recruiting effort.

Marketing the military through sports is a direct appeal to its target audience and their influencers, providing the opportunity to reach individuals who are like-minded. A ban on the surface looks good in this fiscal environment, but, in reality, it would provide no savings and hinder DoD's efforts to reach the most qualified potential recruits.

For the National Guard, sponsorships provide a national platform to promote the Guard image and aid in recruiting. The recruiting and retention dollars spent through sports sponsorships increase the National Guard's prestige and visibility, as well as generate recruiting leads at events.

Most importantly, sponsorships in motorsports through IndyCar and NASCAR illustrate a wise use of taxpayers' dollars considering the return on investment and added value media exposure.

- In 2011 alone, the National Guard's sponsorship of the #88 car driven by Dale Earnhardt Jr. estimated 1,115,940,000 race-related impressions or times an ad or logo were viewed, while the sponsorship of the #4 Panther Racing Indy car driven by J.R. Hildebrand registered 5,925,643,000 impressions.
- In 2011 the Army National Guard spent \$44 million dollars on motorsport sponsorships. However, based on market value, the total media exposure the Guard received through the NASCAR sponsorship totaled \$98,743,739, while Indy exposure totaled \$51,498,376. These two sponsorships accounted for a **368% return on investment**. These numbers alone illustrate the Guard has made a wise investment.

Sports sponsorships go beyond the dollar sign. They extend into the community long after the game, race or match is over.

For instance, the National Guard works together with its partners to develop a national effort to address unemployment affecting military personnel and their spouses. Panther Racing in IndyCar assists the

Guard by connecting returning Guardsmen with employers, inviting prospective employers to race sites to educate them on the challenges faced by military unemployment.

Panther Racing also teams up with the Chamber of Commerce to collaborate with CEOs, bringing them to each race with the goal of engaging them in hiring fairs.

Finally, Panther Racing instituted an employer outreach program that provides executives the opportunity to see military personnel in training at a local base and experience IndyCar firsthand. Twelve events are held each year, the goal of which is to further reach into areas of the country where unemployment is severe.

Regardless of congressional action, it is important to recognize that DoD is already taking steps to address this fiscal climate, moving towards reducing spending in sports marketing programs next year by approximately 30 percent.

The Army National Guard has gone even further, reducing its total pro sports marketing budget by 40 percent, requesting \$24.6 million for FY13. We should not place restrictive handcuffs on DoD since it has both utilized sports marketing programs as well as discontinued such programs when necessary.

This is clear today in light of the Army's recent decision to not renew its sponsorship with NASCAR. Just one good example of how the Army is using its limited funds prudently.

The National Guard has been successful in meeting its targets for quality recruits. They use sports because they know there are limited dollars to meet their goals.

Recruiting for the all-volunteer force isn't what it used to be. Only one in every four young people today is even eligible to join. Today, you have to know how smart, fit young people think, where they live and play, and go to them. Innovative techniques such as sports sponsorships help the National Guard do just that.

We recognize the need to make important decisions in this fiscal environment, but pro sports sponsorships are not just a matter of money. They are an effective and important marketing platform for awareness and development for targeting future potential recruits.

It is more than a recruiting tool; it is about the reciprocal relationship between sports and DoD resulting in important technology sharing, education opportunities, unemployment assistance and even promotion of the patriotic spirit. For the National Guard, pro sports sponsorships provide a serious bang for their buck.

Please vote against legislation sponsored to prohibit the military from sponsoring professional sports as part of military recruiting.

Sincerely,



Gus Hargett
Major General, USA, (Ret)
President